



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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SECRETARY

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### DEQ monitoring at oil spill near New Orleans

BATON ROUGE - On July 23, at approximately 2 a.m., a collision between a ship and a barge occurred on the Mississippi River at mile marker 98, near Harahan, splitting the barge in half. The barge was carrying #6 fuel oil and lost all of its contents, estimated at 9980 barrels. The barge came to rest at mile marker 97 at the Crescent City Connection Bridge.

DEQ emergency responders notified all parishes impacted by the release so that they could take action to protect their water intakes. Parishes shut down their intakes and booms have been deployed around the intakes. Booms were also deployed to protect sensitive wildlife habitats and to contain the oil. The Freshwater Diversion Project at Braithwaite has been diverted with containment boom. Clean up contractors are on site and will begin skimming operations to recover the oil.

Air monitoring, in high traffic areas, such at Riverwalk and the French Quarter, is ongoing. DEQ has emergency responders with a portable air monitor moving around New Orleans where the river is impacted. The air monitor shows low readings of hydrocarbons below any action levels.

Department of Health and Hospital officials are urging residents in the Algiers, St. Bernard, Dalcour and Belle Chase water systems to conserve water, as the intakes have been shut down. These systems have water reserves, but if the reserves run out, and sampling of the finished water shows elevated contaminants, contracts with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to deliver water to the affected areas could be activated at the request of the individual parishes. For more information call the DHH Bureau of Media and Communications at 225-342-1532.

DEQ will continue monitoring, working with incident command and assessing the environmental impact of the spill in the affected area.

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